

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Soviet Bloc May Be Preparing to Provide Military Aid to Cuba

[REDACTED] the Soviet bloc may be prepared to supply Cuba with at least token deliveries of arms. On 11 May, soon after talks opened in Havana between a Czech commercial mission and the Cuban Government, the head of the Chief Technical Directorate of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Trade requested Cuban visas for himself and several other Czech trade officials. The Technical Directorate handles Czech exports of military equipment and is involved in the bloc's arms deals with nonbloc countries. On 12 May the Cuban Foreign Ministry issued the visas, and presumably the Czechs will be available to participate in the negotiations now under way in Havana for a trade and credit agreement.

Castro's intense desire to obtain jet aircraft led to earlier Cuban attempts to procure military equipment from the bloc, but so far all such efforts have been unsuccessful. The visit of the Czech delegation at this time suggests the bloc now may be willing to provide military items not available from Western sources.

Since Mikoyan's visit to Cuba last February, bloc activity in Cuba has increased sharply. Total bloc sugar purchases for 1960 have risen to 1,340,000 tons, Soviet oil and other raw materials have begun to arrive in Cuba, and new commercial agreements have been signed with Poland and East Germany, in addition to the trade and credit pacts with the USSR. [REDACTED] Ten Soviet technicians are en route to Cuba, probably to begin preliminary planning for projects under the \$100,000,000 Soviet line of credit. [REDACTED]

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CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM

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